

# **HOT** **TOPICS**

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CURRENT ISSUES FOR ARMY LEADERS

## **Packed Poison:** The Truth About Tobacco Products



**Tobacco Products and the Warrior**  
***Smoking Facts for Women and Men***  
**Steps to Breaking the Addiction**

RECENT data shows a marked increase in the use of tobacco products among America's Soldiers. The long-term effects of tobacco, such as cancer and emphysema, are well known. The more immediate effects on mission readiness are less known. We now know that using tobacco increases a Soldier's risk of experiencing respiratory problems and injuries to muscles and bones. We also know that tobacco use decreases night vision, slows healing and leads to nicotine addiction.

Addiction to any substance is contrary to the "Warrior Ethos." And the addiction to nicotine is as powerful as heroin or cocaine. The longer you use tobacco, the more difficult it is to become tobacco free.

The time to become tobacco free is now. There are a number of proven methods to free yourself from nicotine addiction. Visit your doctor or visit your local medical treatment facility for help.

JOANN E. HOLLANDSWORTH  
COL, AN  
Director, Health Promotion and Wellness



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Creative Design and Production	IMAGE MEDIA SERVICES, INC., McLean, Va.
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# Become Tobacco Free!

RECENT studies have shown that the use of tobacco products have a negative effect on mission readiness and increase a Soldier's risk of experiencing respiratory problems or suffering injuries to muscles and bones.

If you use tobacco, this issue of ***Hot Topics*** will prepare you for taking that first step to become free of tobacco addiction. You will find information on substances you take into your system when you smoke, dip or chew tobacco.

As a Soldier, if you use tobacco, you can be in danger when deployed in a combat zone, so why put yourself in even more danger by using a product that can also harm your health in many ways?





# Tobacco and the Warrior: A Dangerous Combination

IF Soldiers use tobacco products on the battlefield, they could place themselves and their units at risk. Any form of tobacco use in a war zone adds hazards to an already dangerous environment.

## Concealment

- ❖ A lit cigarette makes you a target. You may be able to hide the cigarette — but you can't hide the smell of smoke. The smell of cigarette smoke can travel a very long way and is easy to track.
- ❖ "Dip spit" leaves a trail that can easily compromise troop location.

## Chemical/Biological Protection

- ❖ How can you satisfy your craving for tobacco products when wearing a protective mask or wearing a bio-hazard suit? The protection offered by your gear is quickly lost if you de-mask to smoke or spit.

## Vision

Soldiers who use any form of tobacco are at risk for vision problems.

- ❖ Both smoke and smokeless tobacco can affect night vision. Nicotine reduces the body's blood flow, which is important to keep eyes functioning at their best.
- ❖ Sudden withdrawal from nicotine, due to long flights or war-zone service, can reduce your ability to think and see clearly.
- ❖ Hand-eye coordination is often decreased in tobacco users.

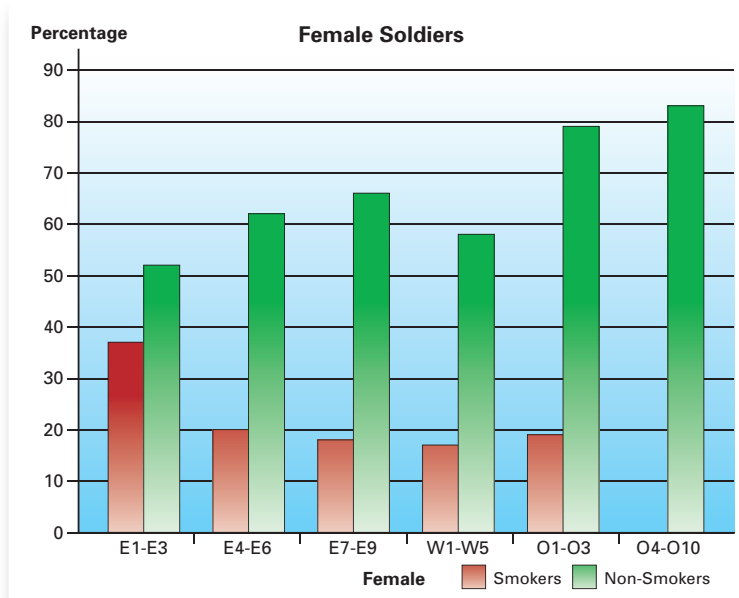
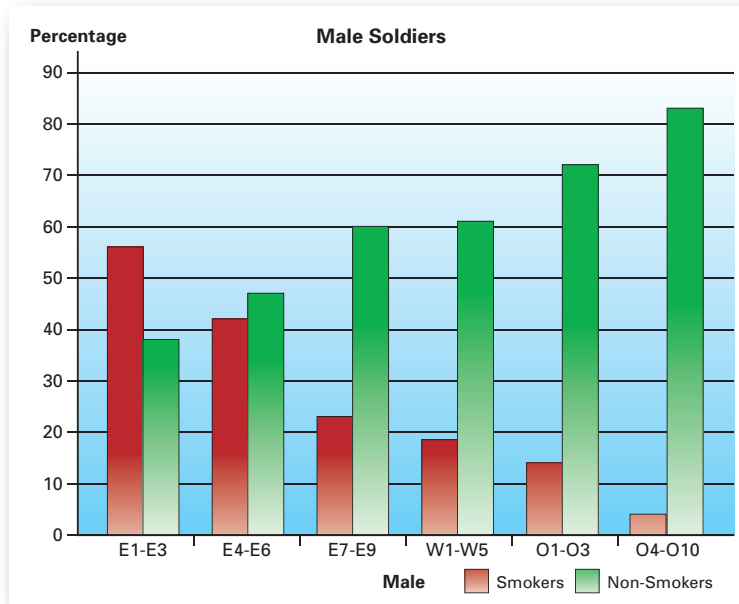
## Overall Health and Endurance

- ❖ Tobacco users have more sick-call visits.
- ❖ Tobacco users have more cold-weather injuries.
- ❖ Tobacco users have almost 2 percent more training injuries.
- ❖ Injuries take longer to heal in tobacco users. Cigarette smoke hinders the healing process.
- ❖ Soldiers who use tobacco have more accidents while on duty than Soldiers who do not use tobacco.
- ❖ Tobacco use decreases stamina.



# Follow the Leaders

THE charts below show the smoking percentages of male and female Soldiers. Notice that Soldiers at higher ranks are less prone to smoke than lower enlisted Soldiers. The leaders of today care about their health for tomorrow. Shouldn't you?



(Source: "2002 DoD Survey of Health-Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel.")



# There is Help Out There

BECOMING or staying tobacco free is one of the most important health decisions a person can make. Seventy percent of adult smokers want to quit, according to a survey by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For some, willpower alone isn't enough to beat the addiction. The Food and Drug Administration has approved a number of tobacco-cessation products to help reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Most can be bought without a doctor's prescription.

Nicotine replacement contains nicotine to help stop cravings and withdrawal symptoms in tobacco users who are trying to give up smoking.

Nicotine-replacement therapies do not contain the cancer-causing ingredients found in tobacco products.

Nicotine-replacement products include patches, gum, sprays and an inhaler device.

Zyban is a drug that has been used, very successfully, to treat nicotine addiction. It works differently from other anti-smoking agents, such as nicotine gum and patches that simply supply an alternative source of nicotine.

Zyban works directly on the nervous system to reduce the craving for nicotine in any form. Zyban is currently available by prescription only and should be taken only under the strict supervision of your health-care provider.

For best results, any form of nicotine replacement or drug therapy should be combined with some type of support group or individualized counseling.

Consult your health-care provider or your pharmacist for advice, and carefully read the information on the package.





# 5 Five Common Myths About Becoming Tobacco Free

**MYTH 1:** Smoking is just a bad habit.

**FACT:** Tobacco use is an addiction. Nicotine is a very addictive drug. For some people, it can be as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

**MYTH 2:** Quitting is just a matter of willpower.

**FACT:** Because smoking is an addiction, quitting is often very difficult. A number of available treatments are available that can help. Ask your health-care provider.

**MYTH 3:** If you can't stop the first time you try, you will never be able to stop.

**FACT:** Becoming free from tobacco addiction is hard. Usually people make two or three tries, or more, before being able to be free for good.

**MYTH 4:** The best way to become tobacco free is “cold turkey.”

**FACT:** The most effective way to be free of tobacco addiction is by using a combination of counseling and nicotine-replacement therapy (such as the nicotine patch, inhaler, gum or nasal spray) or non-nicotine medicines (such as Zyban). Talk to your health-care provider or the Tobacco-Use Cessation coordinator.

**MYTH 5:** Becoming tobacco free is expensive.

**FACT:** Treatments cost from \$3 to \$10 a day until you become free. A pack-a-day smoker spends more than \$1,200 per year. Check with your health-care provider to find out what is available to help you become tobacco free.



# Do You Know What You're Smoking?

THERE are some 4,000 chemicals in cigarettes and cigarette smoke. Of these chemicals, 43 have been identified as causing cancer. Below is a list of some of the chemicals you take into your body when you inhale cigarette smoke. [www.hn.psu.edu/programs/health/cig\\_chemicals.htm](http://www.hn.psu.edu/programs/health/cig_chemicals.htm)

Chemical	What it is - What it can do
<b>Acetone</b>	Used in nail-polish remover.
<b>Ammonia</b>	Used in fertilizers and household cleansers.
<b>Arsenic</b>	Rat poison. Causes bad breath.
<b>Benzopyrene</b>	One of the most potent cancer-causing chemicals known.
<b>Benzene</b>	Industrial chemical in gasoline. Known to cause cancer.
<b>Butane</b>	In gasoline. Highly flammable.
<b>Carbon monoxide</b>	Colorless, odorless gas that starves the body of oxygen.
<b>Cadmium</b>	Known to cause cancer. Can damage the liver, kidney and brain. Can stay in the body more than 10 years.
<b>Formaldehyde</b>	In embalming fluid. Causes cancer and damages the lungs, skin and digestive tract.
<b>Hydrogen cyanide</b>	Colorless poisonous gas. Causes headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting.
<b>Lead</b>	Heavy metal. Stunts growth and damages the brain, kidneys and nervous system.
<b>Methoprene</b>	Insecticide used to kill fleas on pet animals.
<b>Mercury</b>	Heavy metal. Affects the central nervous system causing tremors, memory loss and kidney disease.
<b>Nickel</b>	Heavy metal. Affects the central nervous system, increases chances of respiratory infections.
<b>Nitric oxide</b>	In large doses, can cause short-term breathing problems.
<b>Phenol</b>	Used in disinfectants and plastic. Causes irritation of the skin, eyes and mucous membranes.
<b>Polonium</b>	Radioactive element that is known to be a cause of cancer.
<b>Propylene glycol</b>	Has been shown to aid the delivery of nicotine to the brain.
<b>Styrene</b>	Used in insulation material. Causes headaches, fatigue, weakness and depression.
<b>Toluene</b>	Embalmer's glue. Depresses the central nervous system and causes speech, hearing and vision problems, headaches, dizziness and difficulty sleeping.
<b>Turpentine</b>	Toxic chemical used in paint stripper.

# Smokeless Tobacco: Not a Safe Alternative to Cigarettes

MANY cigarette users have switched to smokeless tobacco over the last several years. They have the idea that where there's no smoke, there's no danger. A study by the U.S. Surgeon General's office shows that smokeless tobacco is more popular now than at any time in the last 50 years.

## **Smokeless Tobacco is More Addictive than Cigarettes**

No matter what form smokeless tobacco is in, it contains chemicals that are absorbed into the bloodstream through mucous membranes in the mouth. Because the nicotine in snuff and chewing tobacco is released gradually, their effects seem to last longer than the effects of cigarettes. Snuff and chewing tobacco have 3 to 5 times more nicotine than cigarettes, making them much more addictive.

## **Dangerous Effects of Smokeless Tobacco**

- Physical dangers include gum disease, erosion of teeth, and cancer of the mouth and throat.
- Like cigarettes, smokeless tobacco can cause heart disease and cancer.



# Nicotine-Addiction Test

CHECK one block per question. You may be addicted if you have a total score of four points or more.

## How Addicted To Nicotine Are You?

Question	0 points	1 point	2 points	Score
1. How soon after you awaken do you smoke your first cigarette?	After 30 minutes	Within 30 minutes		
2. Do you find it hard to refrain from smoking in places where it's forbidden, such as at the library?	No	Yes		
3. Which of the cigarettes that you smoke in a day is the most satisfying?	Any other than the first one in the morning	The first one in the morning		
4. How many cigarettes a day do you smoke?	1-15	16-25	More than 25	
5. Do you smoke more in the morning than during the rest of the day?	No	Yes		
6. Do you smoke when you are ill and in bed most of the day?	No	Yes		
7. Does your brand have a low-, medium- or high-nicotine content?	Low 0.4 mg	Medium 0.5 to 0.9 mg	High 1.0 mg or more	
8. How often do you inhale the smoke from your cigarette?	Never	Sometimes	Always	





# Are You Ready to Become Tobacco Free?

ARE you ready to become free of nicotine addiction? Becoming tobacco free is easier for some than others. Nicotine is the addictive agent that keeps Soldiers coming back for more.

The quiz below can help identify if you are ready to become tobacco free. Take the quiz. See how ready you are.

**Please answer the following questions by circling YES or NO.**

1. Do I want to give up tobacco for myself?	YES	NO
2. Is giving up tobacco a top priority for me?	YES	NO
3. Have I tried to give up tobacco before?	YES	NO
4. Do I believe tobacco is dangerous to my health?	YES	NO
5. Am I committed to trying to give up tobacco even though it may be tough at first?	YES	NO
6. Are my family, friends and coworkers willing to help me give up tobacco?	YES	NO
7. Besides health reasons, do I have other personal reasons for giving up tobacco?	YES	NO
8. Will I be patient with myself if I backslide?	YES	NO

If you answered “YES” to four or more of these questions, you are ready to become tobacco free. For more information, contact professionals at your local medical facility. GOOD LUCK!



# Facts About Smoking and Becoming Tobacco Free

## Nicotine is Addictive.

WE know that most smokers are physically addicted to nicotine. If you smoke a half a pack or more per day, chances are that you are addicted to nicotine. This means that your body is used to having nicotine. Your body has become used to the effects of nicotine, and as this happens, you smoke more and more. Also, when you decide to stop smoking, your body has to get used to not having nicotine. This often feels bad. It is called nicotine withdrawal.

## Common Nicotine-Withdrawal Symptoms:

- irritability
  - increased appetite
  - anxiety
  - difficulty thinking
  - constipation
- lightheadedness
  - headache
  - sleep problems
  - nausea
  - decreased heart rate
  - depression
  - craving for cigarettes

As your body gets used to having no nicotine, these feelings do go away. After a week of not smoking, most of the feelings cease. Having cigarettes, even one, during this time only makes withdrawal longer and harder.

Psychological addiction, like nicotine withdrawal, is an important reason many smokers have trouble quitting. Withdrawal does not feel good. Smoking a cigarette may help, but only for a short time. Thus, it is very tempting to smoke to reduce withdrawal feelings. Some smokers say that they enjoy the taste of a cigarette. The taste of cigarettes does vary based on the cigarette brand. Studies show that when nicotine is taken out of cigarettes, smokers no longer like the taste.





## Warning: Tobacco Use Can Affect Your Sex Life

A rugged cowboy drawing in the reins of his horse at the top of a hill to have a smoke seems to represent the very picture of manliness. But the truth is quite different. Men who use tobacco are 50 percent more likely to suffer from impotence than men who do not use tobacco. The very real dangers of cancer and heart disease often seem far in the future, especially to young and healthy Soldiers. But sexual enjoyment is something that tobacco use could affect right now, or in the very near future.

### Nicotine and Impotence

Nicotine, which is found in all tobacco products, constricts the arteries and blood vessels, including

those that are responsible for the male erection. Nicotine also lowers testosterone and other hormone levels in the blood. And nicotine increases the concentrations of fatty acids in the blood, leading to clogged arteries and further restricting blood flow to the genitals.

### A Question of Attractiveness

Bad breath, the smell of tobacco smoke on hair and clothes, and yellow teeth and fingers are not attractive. And the effects of smokeless tobacco on teeth and gums leads to the same result of unattractive mouth odors and stained or loose teeth. If you think tobacco use makes you sexy, think again!





### **What Becoming Tobacco Free Does for Women**

- Reduces your risk of developing cervical cancer.
- Reduces your risk of osteoporosis, which causes bones to break more easily.
- Reduces risk of heart attack and stroke among those who use birth-control pills.
- Increases your level of self-confidence when doing physical activities.
- Reduces wrinkles and yellow spots on your fingers, and gives you a better sense of taste and smell.
- Helps prevent your children from smoking.
- Lowers the risk of birth defects to your unborn child during pregnancy.
- Lowers the risk of having a stillborn baby or an infant with low birth weight.
- Reduces health risks for your unborn child during pregnancy.
- Prevents exposure of infants to harmful chemicals from tobacco.
- Postpones menopause, lessening early effects of aging.

### **Benefits for All of Becoming Tobacco Free**

- Breathe more easily.
- Enjoy improved overall health for the person and family.
- Have healthier babies and children.
- Feel better about yourself.
- Stop worrying about exposing others to tobacco smoke.
- Enjoy the taste of food more.
- Enjoy improved sense of smell.

(From VA/DoD Tobacco Use Cessation CPG (Revised 2004) [www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/TUC/TUC\\_Base.htm](http://www.oqp.med.va.gov/cpg/TUC/TUC_Base.htm))

# RESOURCES

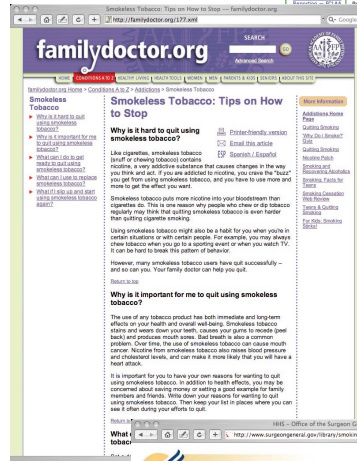


## Tobacco-Cessation Resources

- 1 “How to Quit Smoking: The benefits of quitting, health consequences of smoking on the human body, and what happens within 20 minutes after smokers inhale that last cigarette.”  
[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/how2quit.htm)
- 2 “You Can Quit Smoking”: A complete kit with information to help smokers become tobacco-free.  
[www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/conspack.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/conspack.html)
- 3 “Forever Free: A Guide To Remaining Smoke Free”, National Cancer Institute  
[www.smokefree.gov/pdf.html](http://www.smokefree.gov/pdf.html)
- 4 “Smokeless Tobacco”: Tips on how to stop American Academy of Family Physicians  
[www.familydoctor.org/handouts/177.html](http://www.familydoctor.org/handouts/177.html)
- 5 “Emphasis on smokeless Tobacco, Tobacco Education Basics”  
[www.quit tobacco.com](http://www.quit tobacco.com)
- 6 USACHPPM Tobacco Cessation Tool Kit  
[www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/TobaccoCessation.aspx](http://www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/TobaccoCessation.aspx)
- 7 QuitNet Medication Guide  
[www.quitnet.com/Library/Guides/NRT](http://www.quitnet.com/Library/Guides/NRT)
- 8 “News, Resources and Products to Help you Quit” [www.smokefree.com](http://www.smokefree.com)

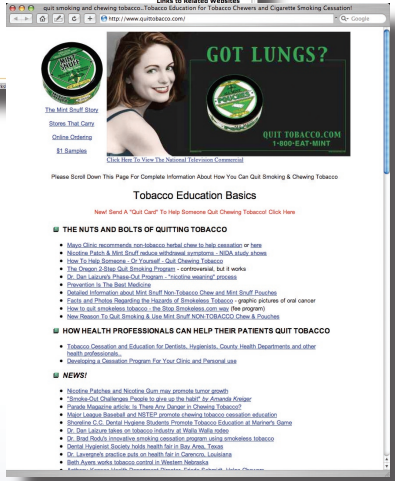
## Resources for Army Leaders

- 1 “The Health Consequences of Smoking: A report of the U.S. Surgeon General.”  
[www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/smokingconsequences](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/smokingconsequences)
- 2 “Tobacco and Readiness: How the use of tobacco affects military performance and readiness.”  
[www.hooah4health.com/4you/tobacco02.htm](http://www.hooah4health.com/4you/tobacco02.htm)

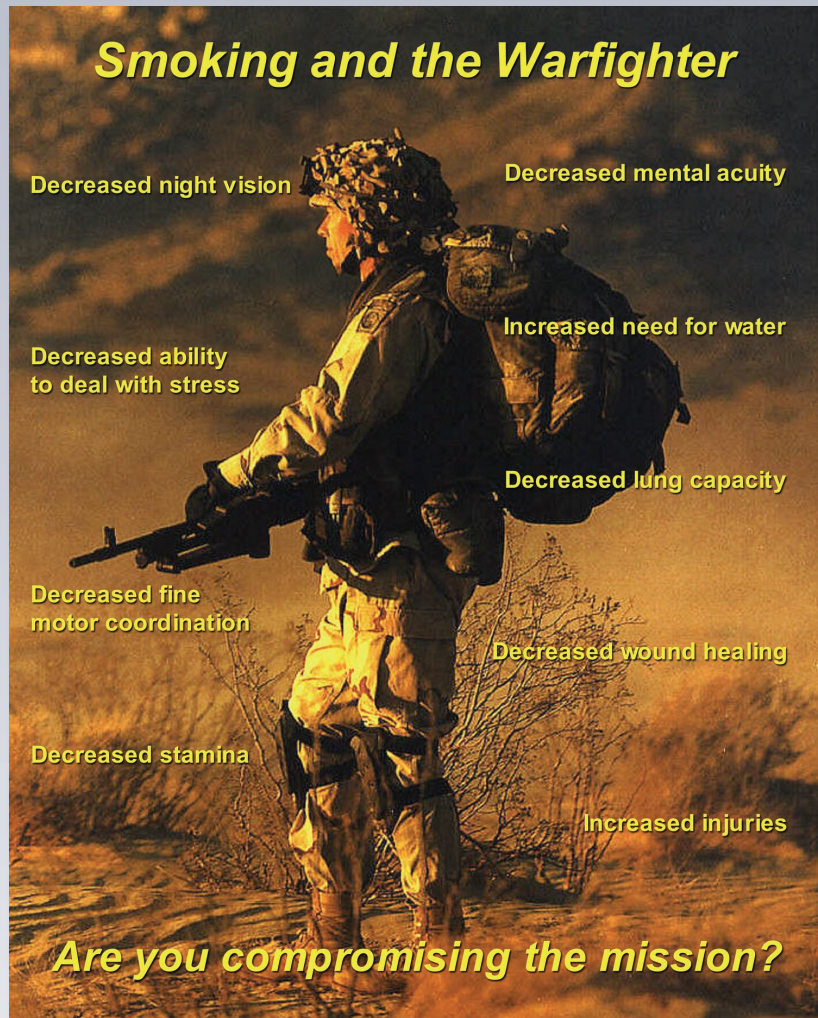


### The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General

- **Executive Summary** - This report provides a summary of the key findings of the report.
- **Introduction** - This section introduces the report and its purpose.
- **What We Know About Smoking** - This section discusses the health consequences of smoking.
- **What We Can Do About Smoking** - This section provides information on how to quit smoking.
- **Conclusion** - This section summarizes the report and its findings.







TO become tobacco free, a person should make a “personal quit plan.” Think about the reasons to quit using tobacco. This plan should include these steps:

**Think** about the reasons for becoming tobacco free.

**Plan** a time to focus on staying tobacco free.

**Act** as the quit date approaches:

- ❶ Get tobacco products out of easy view and reach.
- ❷ Clean all items that contain tobacco smoke.
- ❸ Remove ashtrays, lighters and matches.
- ❹ Get support from fellow Soldiers, family, friends.
- ❺ Avoid alcohol.
- ❻ Avoid smoking areas.

**BOTTOM LINE**

*Don't let tobacco addiction hold you hostage.*